



Code of Good Practice on Partnership Working

For further information contact:

Compact

Voluntary and community groups' involvement in partnership working
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Statutory agencies involved in partnership working

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The website: www.boltoncompact.org.uk

The website holds up to date information on all local and national Codes. There is a feedback form that can be filled in on line. Make your voice heard and have your opinions taken into consideration on any of the Codes. Please log on and find out what else is going on in the world of Bolton Compact.

* This Compact Code of Good Practice will be made available in Urdu, Gujarati on tape and in large print upon request.



Bolton's Compact

Bolton's Compact is a statement of partnership between the local statutory sector and voluntary and community sectors. The Compact represents a commitment to respect each other's rights and responsibilities.

The Compact aims to enhance the way voluntary and community groups and statutory organisations relate to each other, communicate and work together.

As part of the Compact 6 Codes of Good Practice will be produced:

- Black and Minority Ethnic Groups
 - Community Groups
 - Consultation
 - Funding
- Partnership Working
 - Volunteering

Bolton's Code of Good Practice on Partnership Working

Definition of Partnership:

"A coalition of organisations and individuals from more than one sector who agree to work together for a common aim or a set of compatible aims, and who share resources and responsibilities and agree to work together in a co-operative and mutually supportive fashion."

(RAISE - "The step by step guide to successful partnership working")

Introduction:

Bolton has chosen to introduce the Partnership Code as an additional Code of Good Practice to the five national Codes, as part of its commitment to partnership working. The Code itself has evolved from Bolton's successful partnership work.

Public, private, faith and voluntary & community sector organisations need to recognise and respect each others' perspectives and motivations, which are understandably different, but don't have to be incompatible. They need to develop a frank and open relationship in which constructive criticism on both sides is acceptable. They should agree shared aims and objectives, take a shared risk, and share information openly to inform strategic planning and commissioning. Each partner should be open to ideas for developing how services are delivered, acknowledge potential barriers to effective partnership working, and find joint solutions to these barriers.

To effectively support partnership working, the Code should be used together with the other Codes, especially the Code on Volunteering.

What Next?

All partners will be working to implement the Code and develop a toolkit to build on good practice. The Partnership Code Working Group will meet 4 times a year to ensure that the Code makes a real difference to the lives of the people of Bolton. If your organisation would like to be involved please get in touch – contact details are on the back page.

6 key principles for effective partnerships:

1. The purpose of the partnership needs to be clear.

- Clear, shared objectives with a realistic plan and timetable for reaching those objectives.
- Have a clear vision and focus on a few key outcomes. Weed out activity that's not working, to free up time for new ideas.
- Set clear targets to support priorities.
- Ensure that all relevant stakeholders are represented.
- Give realistic consideration to the resources required to function effectively.
- Set out clear shared common ground to identify partners' reasons for participation.
- Assess whether the things it is focusing on are the right ones; this needs to be regularly reviewed.
- A clear framework of responsibilities and accountability / terms of reference.

2. Develop a sense of shared purpose & build relationships between members of the partnership.

- A high level of trust between partners based on agreed and shared principles of co-operation and confidentiality (where appropriate).
- A willingness to work together and consult with the widest possible network of communities and service users.

- Avoid the danger of partners becoming so embedded within the partnership objectives that they lose sight of their own organisational or sectoral objectives.
- Network and share information to avoid suspicion and organisational / sectoral agendas.
- Ensure “equality around the table” to avoid people pulling rank except where it is in the interests of decision-making – e.g. the Chair has the final decision.
- A flexible approach and an openness to new ways of thinking.
- Any conflict should be resolved according to the local Compact Mediation Protocol.

3. Partners must take responsibility for their representatives.

- Partners must be clear who is representing them at partnership meetings and this must be conveyed to the partnership.
- Representatives must be clear that the views they represent are those of their organisation or sector and not their personal views, and that both the individual and the organisation has the required authority to be that representative.
- Representatives must be fully equipped and have the requisite skills, underpinning knowledge etc to enable them to fully contribute (for Volunteers, this is detailed in the Volunteering Code).
- Partners must ensure their representative has a knowledge of the wider issues and reason for membership of the partnership.
- Representatives must have sufficient authority to make decisions at meetings; substitutes need delegated authority.
- There must be clarity within the partnership as to those who are *representing* and those who are *representative of* an organisation or sector, in terms of the level of feedback and consultation that is appropriate.
- Wherever possible, there must be opportunities for representatives to report back and obtain the consensus of opinion of the organisation or sector.

4. Ensure meetings are effective and productive.

- Ensure the views of all parties are represented; two-way flow of information between the partnership and the people the partners represent
- Allow time for discussion.
- Concentrate on relevant issues through clarity in agenda setting, and stick to the agenda at meetings.
- Ensure the partnership continues to meet the needs of its stakeholders through regular reviews, maintaining engagement in order to maximise the benefits to the community.
- Meetings need to be well organised with well structured chairing, timely and well presented information in relevant format in advance of the meeting; a summary of lengthy or complex reports should be provided.
- Dates of meetings should be agreed in advance and circulated to partners and take account of existing commitments as appropriate.
- Any confidential issues must be clearly identified as such; statutory obligations e.g. Data Protection must be observed.
- Meet when you need to – is a formal meeting really necessary? Review meeting cycle; exploit technology; try different formats etc.
- Be aware of new developments in order to make timely interventions rather than being reactive.
- Plan work carefully so that partners know when decisions with significant policy or financial implications will need to be made, giving partners sufficient time to evaluate implications.

5. Employ appropriate monitoring systems.

- Wherever possible, link the partnership’s work with partners’ mainstream activities and ensure that appropriate linkages are made with strategies that inform and influence the work of the partnership.
- Ensure the costs (in terms of time, financial etc) are outweighed by the benefits achieved.
- Chart progress through an agreed and appropriate performance management system which tracks targets against objectives and outcomes, both internal and external.
- Develop practical ways of measuring the partnership’s achievements.
- Communicate the partnership’s success through appropriate channels.
- Learn from best practice & incorporate into procedures.
- Know when to end the partnership – when its job is done.

6. Through training & development, ensure every partnership member is able to make a useful contribution.

- Induction and support (e.g. "buddying", mentoring) for new partners/representatives.
- Induction and support for Chairs.
- Ensure that all bodies are encouraged, supported and equipped to work in partnership. This may require positive capacity building to ensure partners can feel able to play a proper and effective role.
- Provide clear and regular channels of communication through which members can be informed and can influence the business of the partnership, e.g. briefing sessions where necessary or through electronic means.



This Partnership Code of Good Practice was developed by:

Bolton Carers Support
Bolton Community Network
Bolton Council for Voluntary Service
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council
Bolton Vision Partnership
DBBC
Parkinsons Disease Society
The Sycamore Project
YMCA

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NOTES:

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